DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 217 471 CS 207 005

TITLE Talking about Books.
INSTITUTION Parkway School District, Chesterfield, Mo.
PUB DATE [80]
NOTE 52p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Childrens Literature; *Discussion (Teaching Technique); Elementary Secondary Education; *Group Discussion; *Literature Appreciation; Oral Language; Peer Groups; Questioning Techniques; *Reading Comprehension; Teaching Guides

ABSTRACT

Designed to improve students' discussion skills and to promote independent reading, the "Talking about Books" program stresses the improvement of oral language through peer group discussion of books. Like the Junior Great Books program, "Talking about Books" requires that students read selected books independently and then participate in group discussions about these books. The rules for discussion require that teachers ask carefully conceived reflective questions, that responses and contributions to the discussion be made only by students, and that students respond to each other as well as to the questions asked by the teacher or leader. The questions for each book contain two, three, or four main (basic) questions, which are followed by a series of subquestions. The approach used is inductive; that is, by thinking about and answering the subquestions, the students are guided to an understanding and appreciation of the main questions. (This manual presents rules for the discussion in grades two through nine, examples of student self-evaluation forms, criteria for self-evaluation, a discussion leader self-evaluation form, a discussion evaluation form, and a sampling of discussion questions for suggested books.) (HOD)

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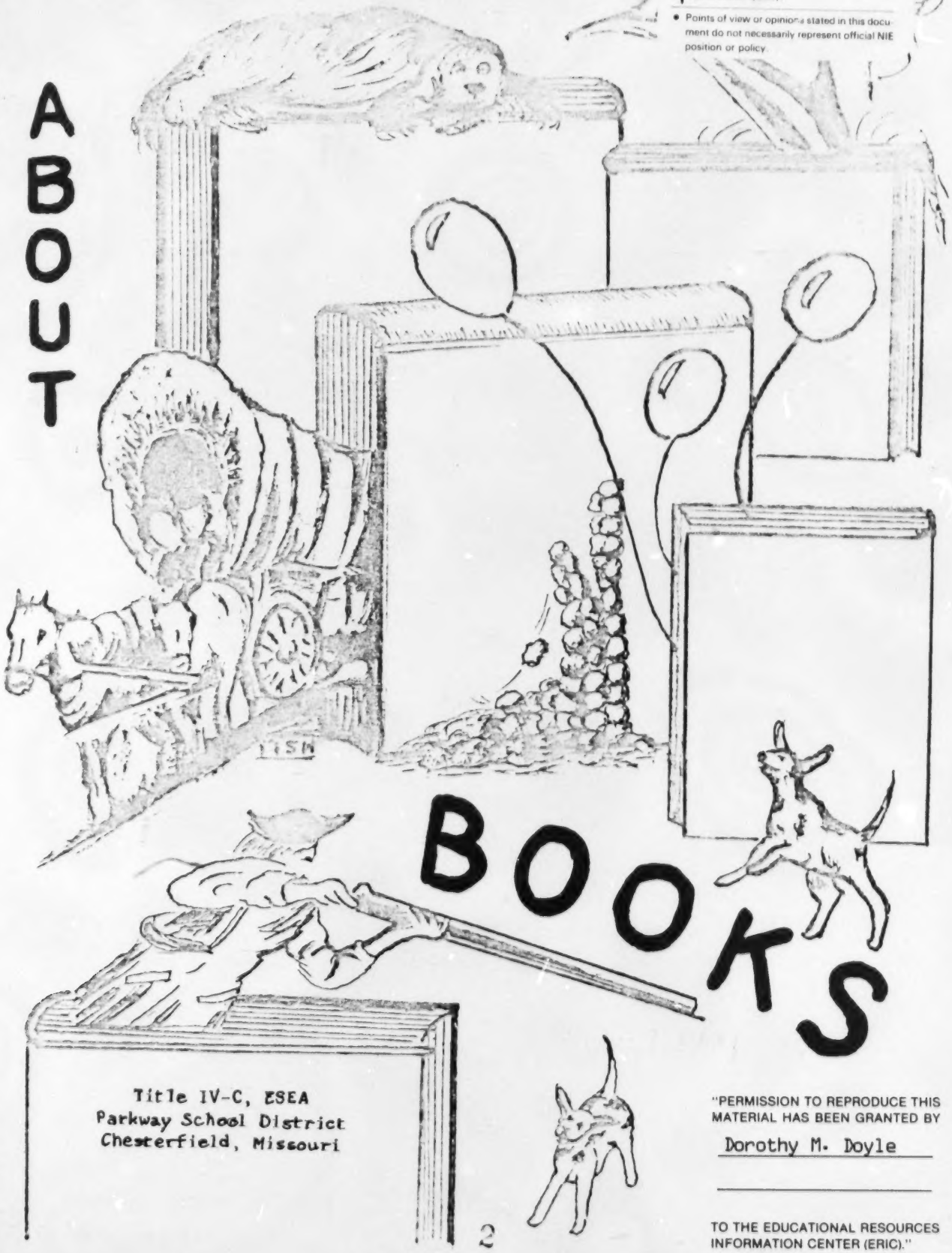
TALKING ABOUT BOOKS



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TALKING ABOUT BOOKS

INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 1980, the Parkway School District, in conjunction with four area private schools, received a Title IV-C grant to implement a program designed to improve their students' discussion skills and to promote independent reading. The full title of this program is TALKING ABOUT BOOKS: THE IMPROVEMENT OF ORAL LANGUAGE THROUGH PEER-GROUP DISCUSSIONS.

For the first year of the program, 1980-81, the target group consisted of students in grades four, five, and six. Children in grades three and seven constituted the target group for the second year, 1981-82. Book discussions have been conducted with students in grades two through eleven.

Teachers, librarians and counselors who work with elementary and junior high school students were trained in summer workshops to initiate the book discussions in their schools. They were assisted by a lead teacher who was released from regular classroom assignments in order to conduct demonstration book discussions in all classes and to help with staff development at the building level. Saturday workshops were held so that this lead teacher and the language art coordinator could work with students and teachers from the non-public schools.

Like the Junior Great Books program, TALKING ABOUT BOOKS requires that students read selected books independently and then participate in group discussions about these books. Also like Junior Great Books, the rules for discussion require that teachers ask carefully conceived, reflective questions; that responses and contributions to the discussion be made only by students; and that students respond to each other as well as to the questions asked by the teacher-leader.

While the program owes a great deal to Junior Great Books, it differs in several important ways. First, TALKING ABOUT BOOKS is designed for heterogeneous groups of students: it is not limited to high achievers. Second, the books and questions to be used as the bases for discussion groups have been chosen by teachers from Parkway and the four cooperating non-public schools. Finally, TALKING ABOUT BOOKS, unlike Junior Great Books, has as one of its main components the evaluation of listening and speaking in group discussion.

Walter Loban, author of one of the most widely used texts in methodology classes for the teaching of English, has recently stated that "Until spoken English is evaluated in education, oral language will continue to be neglected to the detriment of all the language arts. The curriculum inevitably shrinks to the boundaries of whatever evaluation the schools use." Certainly these comments about the importance of evaluation and its link to instruction will not be disputed by educators who have been involved in the struggle to set criteria for the evaluation of writing. Speaking, like writing, is a performance activity in which achievement is not easily measured. Each performance is unique and must be evaluated individually by a trained person. TALKING ABOUT BOOKS makes use of video-tapes to allow students and teachers to study individual and group performance in discussions about books which they have read. Students are expected to understand the competence criteria and to rate their own performance by completing self-evaluation forms, while teachers evaluate their own skills as discussion leaders.

The books used in this program are not to be "taught"; rather, they are to be checked out to the students to be read independently, outside of class time. Parents are encouraged to read the books with their children, particularly in cases where a child has difficulty reading or does not yet read with pleasure. For this program, the emphasis is on thoughtful response to ideas in the books, not on literal comprehension and retention of factual information. The only "testing" in this program occurs in the discussion itself, after which each child will be asked to evaluate his or her performance in speaking, listening, and communicating ideas.

RATIONALE FOR BOOK DISCUSSIONS

The four primary components of the language arts program are reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Reading has been an important emphasis in Parkway's curriculum for years. Since the district's 1977 assessment for Project Quality, we have directed much attention toward the improvement of students' writing. The book discussion program, TALKING ABOUT BOOKS, extends the work we have done in reading and writing to the areas of speaking and listening. For most people, effective group discussion skills are essential tools throughout our lives, since groups are the basic operational units of our society. These skills, however, do not come automatically. They must be learned and practiced regularly.

The aim of a book discussion is to guide children to help one another to learn through reading books and then discussing basic questions presented in them. Most boys and girls have expressed the feeling that they understand and enjoy books more after sharing ideas in a discussion. Poor or reluctant readers have added that it was the first time that they gained true pleasure from reading.

The TALKING ABOUT BOOKS program employs the methods and techniques of the Junior Great Books Foundation, using any book deemed appropriate for the group or for the purpose the teacher selects. The discussions are held in heterogeneously grouped classes. No more than twelve to fifteen children and one adult leader are included in a discussion group.

No attempt is made to summarize or in any way cover the entire book. Instead, a few main ideas or themes are examined thoroughly. Boys and girls are given the opportunity to express their opinions about questions posed by the leader, and to listen to what other students have to say. The leader does not offer any answers, nor does he react in any way to suggest that a student's response was "right" or "wrong" (difficult at first); his role is to ask questions. The children may ask questions, too, but only other boys and girls may offer answers.

The leader encourages participants to agree or disagree with the author and with fellow participants. He may ask a student to back up his opinion with specific reasons based on the reading of the book, or to support it with a valid example. The children are encouraged to make their statements and direct their questions to each other, rather than to the leader (most difficult part for the students to learn). They should not raise their hands; they do not need to wait to be called upon.

As the discussion progresses, it becomes easy to convey the notions that there is no "right" answer and that the main purpose of reading the book has not been to acquire factual information. As differing interpretations of a question are made, there should be a continuing return to specific passages in the book to see what led to varied judgments or responses.

For the most part, the books we have selected are considered appropriate to the interests and reading levels of second through ninth graders, although a few books are appropriate for younger or older students. Each story has been chosen because it is relevant, has general appeal, and is rich in ideas for discussion. Some of the weakest readers may need considerable help from parents or resource persons in reading the book. This is perfectly all right, for our main concern is that each child be able to participate in the discussion.

Book discussions go beyond the objectives described above. In addition to fostering students' pleasure in reading and their self-confidence in thinking, they provide an invaluable opportunity for teaching speaking and listening skills. Through a careful selection of titles, the book discussions have the additional advantage of allowing the integration of learning, especially in the areas of social studies.

QUESTIONING TECHNIQUES

The questions developed for book discussions focus on interpretive reading and discussion. Both the leader-teacher and the students develop the same skills: to read interpretively, to think systematically, and to discover meaning in a written work. Following a careful reading of the book chosen for each group, the leader will ask the kinds of questions that are open-ended--that is, questions which provoke the student to think and then to respond with opinions or solutions. "Absolute" answers are given only to support these opinions or solutions with facts or with specific references to the book under discussion.

Because the questions are open-ended, there are no "correct" answers. "Between the words on the page and [the reader's] opinion is always a leap of the mind. Because of this leap, [the reader] can never be absolutely certain that [he is] correct. Other answers may be possible."[1] Outside opinion, no matter how authoritative, has no place in the book discussion process. Evaluation questions, which ask the reader to agree or disagree with the author's meaning on the basis of his own experience, are used only if they are needed to get the discussion moving. They should be used briefly and sparingly.

The difference between questions of fact and questions of interpretation may often be subtle. For example:

ACCEPTABLE: "Why do you think Scott O'Dell called this book Sing Down the Moon rather than something like The Navahos and the White Man?"

UNACCEPTABLE: Explain why Scott O'Dell called this book Sing Down the Moon.

The first example guides the student to think analytically about the title's meaning. The second question implies that there is a correct answer which the student must discover. The first is a question which requests an opinion; the second is a command which demands a "correct" answer.

Each discussion should contain questions of varying difficulty since the same set of questions will be used with students of varying abilities. It is also beneficial to repeat the same question in another form to clarify it for those who do not understand a particular wording.

The questions for each book contain two, three, or four main (basic) questions, which are underlined. Following the main question is a series of sub-questions. The approach used in our book discussions is inductive; that is, by thinking about and answering the sub-questions, the students will be guided to an understanding and appreciation of the main questions. You will notice that the questions avoid "yes or no" answers, that they are

[1] from the Training Manual for the Junior Great Books Program

precise, and that they do not contain clues which would "lead" the student to a predetermined response.

Basically, six types of questions are incorporated into a book discussion:

1. Situation questions which elicit information about the setting or ask the student to put themselves into a character's situation;
2. General questions which summarize the most significant ideas of the story line;
3. Thought questions which ask the students to analyze meaning and purpose;
4. Summary questions which tie together the responses to the sub-questions;
5. Follow-up questions which ask the children to consider other possible solutions or opinions;
6. Questions to encourage observation.

Questions about sources of information can also be included to encourage children to validate their answers in another source.

The qualities of good discussion questions can be neatly summarized by the following set of evaluative questions.

Are they interpretive questions?
Is there doubt about the answer?
Are they answerable from the reading of the book?
Are they specific?
Are they clearly stated?
Do they matter?

The fundamental point is that the questions are not designed as tests of literal comprehension. Rather, they are structured to help students understand the underlying meanings in books.

ROLE OF THE LEADER

The leader of a book discussion plays a low-keyed role. Having carefully studied the questions and read the book, the leader then assumes the responsibility of asking the questions which will keep the discussion moving. Enthusiasm, interest, flexibility, objectivity, and patience are necessary ingredients for effective leadership.

Before holding a book discussion, the leader should make it clear to the participants that there are no right or wrong answers to the questions; that every response is acceptable if it can be supported; and, indeed, that the leader himself is in doubt about the answer and has much to learn from his students' contributions. It is always a temptation for the leader to impose his own interpretations and values on the children, but to inject an evaluative commentary on a student's contribution tends to stifle further participation. Indeed the leader should not convey any reaction to a response, even non-verbally.

This is not to say that the leader may not praise the students, individually and collectively, for their efforts or provide sympathetic feedback. He may clarify a student's answer when necessary, or summarize the discussion at any point to focus on the main idea. It is the leader's responsibility to keep the participants on the topic. He must, however, guide rather than manipulate the discussion and encourage each child to interpret the author's meaning for himself.

The quiet students need to be given time to feel a part of the group. When they realize that they will not be attacked or ridiculed for what they say, they will begin to join in. Conversely, it may be necessary to intercede to prevent one or two students from monopolizing the discussion and, at times, to provide or allow necessary tension release. In order to respond to the types of interpretive questions asked in book discussions, students are required to think analytically, organize information, and "collect" their thoughts. It is important for the leader to allow "wait time," to de-emphasize the quick, ready answer. A period of silence should also follow the students' responses, permitting participants to amplify or elaborate upon either their own answers or those made by others in the group.

The leader should reread the book he has chosen directly before conducting the discussion. He should be able, if necessary, to refer the students to specific pages in order to help them answer a question so that the discussion can be kept moving. It is also advisable for the leader to pause at times to summarize the ideas which have been presented up to that point.

During a discussion the leader will use his own judgment about whether to omit some of the prepared questions. Sometimes, for example, the students' responses will have anticipated a question which has not yet been asked. Also, the leader should feel free to change the order of the questions if he believes a different sequence would be more effective with a particular group.

It is helpful to the leader to have before him a seating chart indicating where the children have chosen to sit, or a list of names of the participants. In this way it becomes easier for the leader to control the flow of discussion, to encourage children who have not participated, and to keep track of the number and quality of responses made by each student.

At the heart of a good book discussion program is the belief that everything the author says has a meaning, whether we have thought of it ourselves or not. The leader does not seek one "answer" that satisfies everyone; rather, he works towards a multiplicity of responses, all of which have validity in one way or the other.

Depending on the nature of your group and the degree of their sophistication in group discussion, it may be necessary to remind the students that they must read the book carefully immediately before the discussion, or they will not be able to participate. Having read the book "last year" or even a month before will not enable a child to remember the story in sufficient detail and depth. Students should also realize that the meetings are not very long, and that the discussion must be confined to exploring the meaning of the book. During the book discussion itself, there is no time for talking about personal experiences which have nothing to do with the prescribed reading.

Each student should be encouraged to give his opinion, feeling that his ideas are just as important as anyone else's. With training, the participants will learn the value of being able to cite the passage in the book which explains their idea. The children should also feel at ease about speaking up if they fail to understand a question being posed or a statement being made by one of their fellow participants. If they disagree with what someone says, they should state the reasons why. Perhaps one of the students has made a mistaken judgment by not reading carefully, or has a better way of explaining what happened. Expanding or building on a statement made by a previous speaker (piggy-backing) should also be encouraged.

Each child should bring a copy of the book to the discussion session. It is also advantageous to bring a pencil and notebook. While reading the book, the child can write down questions which may have occurred to him. Possibly he recognized a sentence or paragraph which gave a significant clue about the meaning of the story. Having made a note of the idea and the page number, he can readily refer to his notebook during the discussion. During the discussion itself, the student may note questions related to statements made by his fellow participants.

RULES FOR THE DISCUSSION
Grades 2 and 3

A book discussion is a time to talk with each other about a book you have all read or heard. Each of you will have a chance to say what you think about some questions and to hear what others say.

RULES

1. I will ask questions, but I will not offer any answers. You will discuss the answers with each other.
2. Make your statements to your classmates, not to me.
3. You may agree or disagree with others if you can tell why.
4. You need not raise your hand, but be courteous and don't interrupt others.
5. Be a good listener. Listen to what others have to say.
6. Be a good speaker. Speak so others can hear and understand you.
7. Encourage others to speak by agreeing with them and/or adding to their answers.

RULES FOR THE DISCUSSION
Grades 4-9

Before the first and second experiences which children have with book discussions, it is important to read to them the rules which they, as participants, must follow. As the children become familiar and comfortable, it is still advisable before each discussion to review the rules in whatever way the teacher deems appropriate.

RULES

"We can help each other to learn by reading and discussing this book. In so doing, you are offered both a challenge and a reward. The challenge is to think about difficult and basic questions: What can we learn from the ideas in this book? Can it teach us how we should act? Can it show us who we are, what our roots are, where we are going, and what we may become? The reward is the realization that these questions underlie everything we study and do. The better we understand the answers to these questions, the better we understand ourselves and the world around us, and anticipate what we want to make of our lives.

"You will have an opportunity to express your opinions about some questions and to hear what others have to say. I will not offer answers; my role is to ask questions that help you to explore the ideas in the book. You may ask questions too, but only you and the other children may offer answers.

"I will encourage you to agree or disagree with what the author and your fellow participants have to say. You may be asked to back up your opinions with reasons based on the reading of the book. You will discover that you understand and enjoy the book much more after sharing ideas in discussion.

"Don't judge a statement by who makes it or how many participants agree or disagree with it, but by how well it is supported with examples from the book or reasons and examples that you can think of yourself. If you repeat an idea given by someone else, you will be expected to back it up as if it were your own.

"We will examine a few main ideas thoroughly rather than try to cover the whole book. Speak up freely. Say what you think and be ready to give reasons. You may agree or disagree with anything said by your fellow participants, but be able to give reasons. Make your statements to them, not to me. You need not raise your hand or wait to be called upon to speak. Exercise rules of courtesy and don't interrupt others. Don't engage in private conversations; be willing to wait if you start to speak at the same time as another person."

NAME _____

SCHOOL _____

DATE _____

DISCUSSION TOPIC _____

FORM #1-P

Primary Grades

STUDENT SELF EVALUATION

I WAS A GOOD SPEAKER

1. I spoke so everyone could hear me. YES NO
2. I looked at people when I spoke to them. YES NO
3. I contributed my fair share to the discussion YES NO

___more than I should have Why? _____

_____

____less than I should have Why? _____

_____

4. I feel people in the group paid attention to what I said. YES NO
5. I was afraid to talk during the discussion. YES NO

I WAS A GOOD LISTENER

6. I listened to each student. YES NO
7. I looked at each speaker. YES NO
8. I did not interrupt other speakers. YES NO
9. I thought about what others said. YES NO

I SHARED MY IDEAS WELL

10. I had read the book. YES NO
11. I explained my ideas clearly. YES NO
12. I backed up my ideas with reasons. YES NO
13. I helped keep the discussion on the topic. YES NO

OPTIONAL QUESTIONS

The hardest thing for me to do in this discussion was _____

_____

_____

_____

The thing I liked most about this discussion was _____

_____

_____

_____

One way I improved in this discussion was _____

_____

_____

_____

NAME _____

SCHOOL _____

DATE _____

DISCUSSION TOPIC _____

_____

I IMPROVED IN THIS DISCUSSION BY _____

_____

_____

_____

THE HARDEST THING FOR ME IN THIS DISCUSSION WAS _____

_____

_____

_____

IN THIS DISCUSSION, I FOUND IT HARD TO LISTEN TO PEOPLE WHO _____

_____

_____

_____

THE THING I LIKED MOST ABOUT THIS DISCUSSION WAS _____

_____

_____

_____

THIS DISCUSSION HELPED ME TO SEE _____

_____

_____

_____

NAME _____

SCHOOL _____

DATE _____

DISCUSSION TOPIC _____

FORM #1-I

Intermediate Grades 4-6

STUDENT SELF EVALUATION

SPEAKING SKILLS

1.	I spoke as clearly as I could.	YES	NO
2.	I think that everyone in the group could hear me.	YES	NO
3.	I looked at people when I spoke to them.	YES	NO
4.	I asked questions when I didn't understand.	YES	NO
5.	I contributed my fair share to the discussion.	YES	NO
	_____more than I should have*		
	_____less than I should have*		
	You may give a reason for your answer in the space below.		
6.	I feel people in the group paid attention to what I said.	YES	NO
7.	I was afraid to talk during the discussion.	YES	NO
8.	I encouraged others.	YES	NO

LISTENING SKILLS

9.	I thought it was important to listen to each student.	YES	NO
10.	I looked at each speaker.	YES	NO
11.	I listened politely by not interrupting.	YES	NO
12.	I was willing to listen to others' opinions.	YES	NO
13.	I was easily distracted.	YES	NO
14.	I accepted others' ideas without thinking about them.	YES	NO
15.	I could understand other students' ideas.	YES	NO

IDEAS

16.	I was prepared for the discussion.	YES	NO
17.	I think that everyone could understand my ideas.	YES	NO
18.	I backed up my ideas with reasons.	YES	NO
19.	I built on other students' ideas ("piggy-backed").	YES	NO
20.	If I disagreed, I backed up my reasons with information from the book.	YES	NO
21.	I helped keep the discussion on the topic.	YES	NO

NAME _____

SCHOOL _____

DATE _____

DISCUSSION TOPIC _____

_____

I IMPROVED IN THIS DISCUSSION BY _____

_____

_____

_____

THE HARDEST THING FOR ME IN THIS DISCUSSION WAS _____

_____

_____

_____

IN THIS DISCUSSION, I FOUND IT HARD TO LISTEN TO PEOPLE WHO _____

_____

_____

_____

THE THING I LIKED MOST ABOUT THIS DISCUSSION WAS _____

_____

_____

_____

THIS DISCUSSION HELPED ME TO SEE _____

_____

_____

_____

WHAT THE STUDENT SELF EVALUATION MEASURES
(Intermediate Grades 4-6)

Each of the twenty-one questions on the evaluation form for students corresponds with an item on the outline of criteria for competence for discussion. To make your work easier and to encourage you to utilize the criteria as well as the evaluation forms for all discussion activities, below you will find the criteria each question attempts to measure. You may find this is a helpful reference if students have questions about the items on the evaluation.

1. vocal clarity; articulation; fluency
2. appropriate volume; etiquette
3. eye contact
4. self confidence; willingness to admit to lack of understanding, critical listening
5. self confidence; initiative
6. self confidence
7. self confidence
8. etiquette
9. etiquette; positive listening attitude
10. eye contact; attention
11. etiquette
12. attitude; acknowledging different views; open-mindedness
13. attitude; listens actively; focuses on discussion
14. attitude; examines ideas objectively; critical listening
15. identifying different views; summarizing a position
16. has the student read the material
17. presents ideas clearly; presents ideas logically
18. supports ideas with examples, logic, specific references
19. extends on the ideas of others; redirects the flow of discussion
20. gives reasons for disagreement; presents ideas logically; supports ideas with incidents, direct citations, critical thinking
21. makes relevant contributions; focuses on main ideas

ON SCORING

Please help students understand the items on their self-evaluation forms. As they circle YES or NO for each item, walk around the room to emphasize that you want them to be honest and correct in their evaluations.

The "correct" answer is YES for all questions except numbers 7, 13, and 14. You may use the following scale for interpreting the scores.

Total "correct" answers	Rating
21, 20	Outstanding
19, 18	Highly Competent
17, 16, 15	Competent
14, 13	Somewhat Competent
12 or fewer	Inadequate

NAME _____

SCHOOL _____

DATE _____

DISCUSSION TOPIC _____

FORM #1-JHS

Junior High School

STUDENT SELF EVALUATION

SPEAKING SKILLS

1.	I spoke as clearly as I could.	YES	NO
2.	I think that everyone in the group could hear me.	YES	NO
3.	I looked at people when I spoke to them.	YES	NO
4.	I contributed my fair share to the discussion.	YES	NO
	____more than I should have Why? _____		
	____less than I should have Why? _____		
5.	I was willing to admit that I did not understand.	YES	NO
6.	I was willing to ask questions.	YES	NO
7.	I was willing to disagree.	YES	NO
8.	I feel people in the group paid attention to what I said.	YES	NO
9.	I was afraid to talk during the discussion.	YES	NO
10.	I was considerate of others.	YES	NO
11.	I encouraged others.	YES	NO

LISTENING SKILLS

12.	I thought it was important to listen to each student.	YES	NO
13.	I looked at each speaker.	YES	NO
14.	I allowed others to finish.	YES	NO
15.	I allowed others to speak.	YES	NO
16.	I listened actively (didn't fake attention or day-dream).	YES	NO
17.	I was willing to listen to others' opinions.	YES	NO
18.	I distinguished between fact and opinion.	YES	NO

IDEAS

19.	I was prepared for the discussion.	YES	NO
20.	I think that everyone could understand my ideas.	YES	NO
21.	I supported my ideas with direct citation and/or incidents from the book.	YES	NO
22.	I backed up my ideas with reasons.	YES	NO
23.	I built on other students' ideas ("piggy-backed").	YES	NO
24.	I examined ideas before accepting or rejecting them.	YES	NO
25.	When I disagreed, I backed up my reasons with information from the book.	YES	NO
26.	I helped keep the discussion on the topic.	YES	NO

NAME_____

SCHOOL_____

DATE_____

DISCUSSION TOPIC_____

THE HARDEST THING FOR ME IN THIS DISCUSSION WAS_____

_____

_____

_____

IN THIS DISCUSSION, I FOUND IT HARD TO LISTEN TO PEOPLE WHO_____

_____

_____

_____

THE THING I LIKED MOST ABOUT THIS DISCUSSION WAS_____

_____

_____

_____

THIS DISCUSSION HELPED ME TO SEE_____

_____

_____

_____

NAME_____

SCHOOL_____

DATE_____

FORM # 2

DISCUSSION TOPIC_____

DISCUSSION LEADER SELF EVALUATION

SPEAKING/LISTENING SKILLS

1.	When a reticent student took part, I made special notice of it.	YES	NO
2.	I praised insightful reading and ideas.	YES	NO
3.	I listened with interest to all students.	YES	NO
4.	I utilized questions to draw students out.	YES	NO
5.	I gave students sympathetic feedback.	YES	NO
6.	I praised the group (when appropriate) for good work.	YES	NO
7.	I contolled my emotions.	YES	NO
8.	I was patient with all group members.	YES	NO
9.	I displayed enthusiasm and interest.	YES	NO
10.	I encouraged students to be open-minded.	YES	NO
11.	I spoke clearly and effectively.	YES	NO
12.	I looked at the student(s) to whom I was speaking.	YES	NO
13.	I looked at each person when he/she spoke.	YES	NO
14.	I listened for places when the group had finished a topic and then summarized.	YES	NO

IDEATION

15.	I had carefully re-read the book and would have been able to refer students to specific pages when necessary.	YES	NO
16.	I had prepared quality questions for the discussion.	YES	NO
17.	I had prepared the class environment, sufficient and correct materials, and had checked all equipment.	YES YES	NO NO
18.	My questions were direct and open ended.	YES	NO
19.	I asked other students to extend /clarify a participant's answer when necessary.	YES	NO
20.	I stimulated creative interpretation.	YES	NO
21.	My explanations and questions were clear.	YES	NO
22.	Through my questions, I made students aware of and helped them empathize with: people from other countries, cultures, and lifestyles, personal problems and handicaps, and values different from their own.	YES	NO

GENERAL LEADERSHIP SKILLS

23.	I attempted to involve all students in the discussion.	YES	NO
24.	I did not allow one or two students to monopolize the discussion.	YES	NO
25.	I kept the discussion on the topic.	YES	NO
26.	I dealt effectively with problems during the discussion.	YES	NO
27.	I refrained from imposing my ideas and interpretations.	YES	NO
28.	I kept the discussion going.	YES	NO
29.	I was flexible.	YES	NO
30.	I did not hurry the discussion.	YES	NO
31.	I directed rather than manipulated the discussion.	YES	NO
32.	I oriented the students in group discussion techniques/rules.	YES	NO
33.	I explained the objectives of the discussion.	YES	NO
34.	I summarized the discussion and focused on the main ideas.	YES	NO
35.	I created a positive climate.	YES	NO
36.	I balanced participation among discussants.	YES	NO
37.	I helped to provide necessary tension releases.	YES	NO
38.	I allowed appropriate wait time both after asking a question and after student responses.	YES	NO

FORM # 3

STUDENT EVALUATION FOR DISCUSSION

Name _____ Topic _____

Date _____ Score _____

	0	1	2	3	4	5	COMMENTS
I. SPEAKING							
A. Process							
1. Voice							
a. Articulation							
b. Audible, pleasant voice							
c. Fluency, suitable rate							
d. Inflection							
2. Maintenance of eye contact							
3. Body							
a. Facial animation							
b. Appropriate gestures							
c. Acceptable postures							
B. Speech confidence							
1. Initiation of ideas							
2. Willingness to ask questions							
3. Willingness to disagree							
4. Willingness to admit lack of understanding							
C. Speech etiquette							
1. Consideration for others							
2. Praising others							
3. Encouraging others							
D. Language							
1. Appropriateness							
2. Acceptable pronunciation							
3. Clear Expression of ideas							
4. Clarification of others' ideas							
5. Ability to express author's meaning							
II. LISTENING							
A. Etiquette							
1. Maintains eye contact							
2. Allows others to finish							
3. Allows others to speak							
4. Exhibits positive listening behavior							
B. Attitude							
1. Has acceptable attention span							
2. Listens actively (doesn't fake attention or day dream)							
3. Reacts to discussion							
4. Acknowledges differing viewpoints							
5. Controls emotions							
6. Creates and maintains interest							
C. Critical listening							
1. Has sufficient listening vocabulary to follow discussion							
2. Can accurately paraphrase a statement							
3. Can accurately summarize a position							
4. Can distinguish fact from opinion							
5. Can distinguish material from interpretation							
6. Can identify different viewpoints							

III. IDEATION	0	1	2	3	4	5	COMMENTS
A. Preparation							
1. Can answer questions about reading							
2. Supports ideas with incidents and/or direct citation							
3. Supports ideas with reasons							
B. Reasoning							
1. Presents ideas clearly							
2. Presents ideas logically							
3. Extends on ideas of others							
4. Gives reasons for disagreement							
5. Focuses on main ideas							
6. Redirects flow of discussion							
7. Examines ideas objectively before accepting or rejecting							
C. Understanding							
1. Separates ideas from emotional content							
2. Makes relevant contributions							
3. Can summarize main ideas							
4. Can relate literature to self							
5. Can identify values of author (through characters)							
6. Can distinguish reality from fancy							
7. Can identify relevant points of similarity and difference to other literature							

On each scored item in the checklist, use the following:

5 Outstanding
4 Highly competent
3 Competent
2 Somewhat competent
1 Inadequate
0 Unacceptable

TALKING ABOUT BOOKS
Title IV-C, ESEA

Book List
Primary Grades
August, 1981

Following is the list of books for which "book discussion" questions have been prepared. The teachers who wrote these questions also suggested grade levels at which the books might be used. Classes will vary, however, in their interests and overall reading ability; therefore, as long as teachers in any one school remain careful about avoiding overlap and repetition, it is possible to use the books at grade levels other than the ones suggested.

Grade 2

ALEXANDER AND THE TERRIBLE, HORRIBLE, NO GOOD, VERY BAD DAY
ALBERT'S TOOTHACHE
*THE BIGGEST BEAR
*CORDUROY
*DANNY'S PIG
*EVAN'S CORNER
*FLY HIGH, FLY LOW
FREDERICK
* FISH IS FISH
*HARRY, THE DIRTY DOG
IRA SLEEPS OVER
* THE LACE SNAIL
* A LITTLE HOUSE OF YOUR OWN
THE LITTLE ENGINE THAT COULD
* LEO, THE LOP
THE POPCORN DRAGON
* ROTTEN RALPH
STREGA NONA
SAM, BANGS, AND MOONSHINE (also in 3)
* SWIMMY
SYLVESTER AND THE MAGIC PEPPLE
THE STORY OF FERDINAND
* ROUGH ICE
A TIGER CALLED THOMAS
* THERE'S A NIGHTMARE IN MY CLOSET
THE WAVE (also used in grade 3)
WHAT DO YOU DO WITH A KANGAROO?
WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE
THE WITCH'S EGG (also in grade 3)

Grade 3

ARROW TO THE SUN
THE CABIN FACED WEST (also in grade 4)
A CAMEL IN THE TENT
*CROW BOY
DID YOU CARRY THE FLAG TODAY, CHARLEY?
FRECKLE JUICE
THE FORTY-NINTH MAGICIAN
THE HUNDRED DRESSES
* I'LL TELL ON YOU
JOEL AND THE WILD GOOSE
THE KING WHO WAS TOO BUSY
* THE LEATHERMAN
LEO THE LATE BLOOMER
*MAGIC IN A GLASS JAR
MEET MIKI TAKINO
MICHAEL THE UPSTAIRS DOG
THE MOUSE AND THE MOTORCYCLE
NINE IN A LINE
ONE MORNING IN MAINE
THE PRINCE WITH A HUNDRED DRAGONS
SAM, BANGS, AND MOONSHINE (also in grade 2)
*STEVIE'S OTHER EYES
THE SNAKE IN THE CARPOOL
STONE SOUP
STUART LITTLE
SYLVESTER AND THE MAGIC PEBBLE (also in grade 2)
* THEY WALK IN THE NIGHT
* TIGERS IN THE CELLAR
* THE TENTH GOOD THING ABOUT BARNEY
THE WAVE
A WEED IS A FLOWER
THE WITCH'S EGG (also in grade 2)
SHOESHINE GIRL (also in grade 4)

*Questions are available for these books, but multiple copies of the books are not available. Teachers could read these books aloud to the children and then conduct a discussion. Elementary librarians might be willing to lend copies from the Parkway libraries so that a teacher might obtain twenty or so copies of the book.

TALKING ABOUT BOOKS

Book List
Intermediate
August, 1981

Following is the list of books for which "book discussion" questions have been prepared. The teachers who wrote these questions also suggested grade levels at which the books might be used. Classes will vary, however, in their interests and overall reading ability; therefore, as long as teachers in any one school remain careful about avoiding overlap and repetition, it is possible to use the books at grade levels other than the ones suggested. Any titles which are preceded by an asterisk (*) are read-alouds. This means that, while questions for these books have been prepared, the TALKING ABOUT BOOKS program does not have copies of the book.

GRADE 4

ABRAHAM LINCOLN
ANNIE AND THE OLD ONE
THE BAT-POET
THE CABIN FACED WEST
CHARLOTTE'S WEB
CHILD OF THE SILENT NIGHT
THAT CRAZY APRIL
DID YOU CARRY THE FLAG TODAY, CHARLEY?
*THE GIVING TREE
THE HUNDRED PENNY BOX
THE LIMERICK TRICK
MACAROON
MOKI
*ONE TO GROW ON
ONE SMALL BLUE BEAD
A PENNY'S WORTH OF CHARACTER
THE QUESTION BOX
RAMONA AND HER FATHER
THE REAL THIEF
SADAKO AND THE THOUSAND PAPER CRANES
SHOESHINE GIRL
*STONE FOX
THIRTY PLAYS FOR CLASSROOM READING
TRUMPET OF THE SWAN
THE VELVETEEN RABBIT
*WHITE BIRD
THE WILLOW WHISTLE

GRADE 5

ABEL'S ISLAND
AMAHL AND THE NIGHT VISITORS
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN (poem)
THE CAY
THE CRICKET IN TIMES SQUARE
THE 18th EMERGENCY
ELLEN GRAE
FAVORITE PLAYS FOR CLASSROOM READING
FROM THE MIXED-UP FILES OF MRS. BASIL E. FRANKWEILER
IT'S A MILE FROM HERE TO GLORY
J.T.
JENNIFER, HECATE, MACBETH, WILLIAM MCKINLEY, AND ME, ELIZABETH
MARY JANE
MY FRIEND FLICKA
ONLY THE NAMES REMAIN
THE PINBALLS
SEVEN ALONE
SING DOWN THE MOON
SKIPPACK SCHOOL
SPIES ON THE DEVIL'S BELT
SUMMER OF THE SWANS
A TASTE OF BLACKBERRIES
THERE ARE TWO KINDS OF TERRIBLE
THUMBPRINTS (poem)
THE 290

*ALL THE CHILDREN WERE SENT AWAY
*CHILDREN IN HIDING
*DO BANANAS CHEW GUM
*ESCAPE TO WITCH MOUNTAIN
*FOLLOW MY LEADER
*THE GREAT RAT ISLAND ADVENTURE
*THE HOUSE OF SIXTY FATHERS
*KONRAD
*AN ORPHAN FOR NEBRASKA
*THE THANKSGIVING TREASURE
*THANK YOU, JACKIE ROBINSON
*SNOW TREASURE

GRADE 6

BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
BUNNICULA
CALL IT COURAGE
*CAPTAIN GREY
THE CARTOONIST
THE DOOR IN THE WALL
ESCAPE FROM WARSAW
THE GREAT GILLY HOPKINS
ISLAND OF THE BLUE DOLPHINS
THE JUNGLE BOOKS
THE LION, THE WITCH, AND THE WARDROBE

(OVER)

GRADE 6 (cont'd)

THE LONER
MAYBE, A MOLE
THE RAIN FOREST
THE SECRET GARDEN
SHADOW OF A BULL
SOUNDER
*THE SUPERLATIVE HORSE
TEETONCEY
THE 21 BALLOONS
WHERE THE RED FERN GROWS
A WRINKLE IN TIME

TALKING ABOUT BOOKS
Title IV-C, ESEA

Book List
Junior High School
August, 1981

Following is the list of books for which "book discussion" questions have been prepared. The teachers who wrote these questions also suggested grade levels at which the books might be used. Classes will vary, however, in their interests and overall reading ability; therefore, as long as teachers in any one school remain careful about avoiding overlap and repetition, it is possible to use the books at grade levels other than the ones suggested. Titles preceded by an asterisk (*) are ones for which the TALKING ABOUT BOOKS program does not have copies. Questions for the books, however, have been prepared.

ALL TOGETHER NOW (7,8,9)
ANNE FRANK: DIARY OF A YOUNG GIRL (8)
BANNER IN THE SKY (7)
BIG RED (7)
THE BLACK PEARL (7)
THE CAY (5,7)
THE CONTENDER (7)
DAVE'S SONG (9)
DIBS IN SEARCH OF SELF (9)
DORP DEAD (7,8,9,10)
EDGAR ALLAN (7)
GENTLEHANDS (8)
*THE GIRL WHO HAD NO NAME (8)
I HEARD THE OWL CALL MY NAME (9)
JACOB HAVE I LOVED (9)
JULIE OF THE WOLVES (7,8,9)
THE LANTERN BEARERS (7)
THE LEMMING CONDITION (9)
THE LIGHT IN THE FOREST (7,8)
LOCKED IN (5-12)
THE LOTTERY ROSE (7)
THE MAN WHO WAS DON QUIXOTE:
THE STORY OF MIGUEL CERVANTES (7,8,9)
THE MAUDE REED TALE (7)
MY BROTHER SAM IS DEAD (8)
*NIGHT JOURNEYS (8)
NO PROMISES IN THE WIND (7)
OLD YELLER (7)
ONE IS ONE (7)
OUTLAW RED (7)
THE PEARL (9)
THE RED PONY (8)
ROLL OF THUNDER, HEAR MY CRY (7)
THE 79 SQUARES (9)
A SMART KID LIKE YOU (7)
SUMMER OF THE MONKEYS (7)
A SWIFTLY TILTING PLANET (9)
TEACUP FULL OF ROSES (7)
A TIME TO LOVE AND A TIME TO MOURN (7)
TOBY, GRANNY AND GEORGE (8)
TREASURE ISLAND (7)
TUCK EVERLASTING (7)
WALKABOUT (8)
THE WITCH OF BLACKBIRD POND (7)
WHERE THE LILIES BLOOM

IRA SLEEPS OVER
Bernard Waber
Grade 2
Questions developed by
Margaret Hutchingson

WHAT PROBLEM DID IRA HAVE WHEN REGGIE ASKED HIM TO SPEND THE NIGHT?

Why was Ira so happy about sleeping at Reggie's house?

How did Ira feel as he and Reggie were making plans for the evening? Why did he say, "Great! I can hardly wait "?

Why did Ira's mood change when his sister asked him, "Are you taking your teddy bear along"?

Why did Ira's mother and father think he should take his teddy bear? Why did his sister insist he shouldn't?

Do you think Ira's sister was teasing him or trying to be helpful?

Why did Ira keep changing his mind? Why did he finally decide to leave his teddy bear at home?

HOW WAS IRA'S PROBLEM SOLVED?

While Ira and Reggie were making their plans, why did Ira ask, "What do you think of teddy bears"?

How do you think Ira felt when Reggie wouldn't answer his question?

Why were the boys surprised when Reggie's father said it was bedtime?

Why did Reggie suggest telling ghost stories?

When Reggie got up to get his teddy bear out of the drawer, why did he say he was getting "something"?

Why did Reggie make Ira promise not to laugh before he told him that his teddy's name was Foo Foo?

Why was Ira able to go home for his teddy bear after Reggie had his?

Why do you think Reggie fell asleep while Ira was getting Tah Tah?

How do you suppose Ira's parents knew all along that Reggie wouldn't laugh at his teddy bear?

SUGGESTED ESSAYS

Topic: My Bedtime Toy
1st Sentence: There are two reasons why I take (or why I would like to take)_____ to bed with me.

Topic: Sleeping Over
1st Sentence: If my mom would let me have a friend spend the night; I would invite _____ for two reasons.

OR

If my friend invited me to sleep over, there are two reasons why I would want to go.

Topic: Big Sisters (or Brothers)
1st Sentence: My older sister (or brother) gives me advice in two ways.

Topic: Parents
1st Sentence: There are two reasons why I usually take my parents' advice.

Topic: Decisions
1st Sentence: The times I find it hardest to make up my mind are two.

Topic: Ghost Stories
1st Sentence: There are two reasons why I like (or don't like) to tell ghost stories before I go to bed.

Topic: Bedtime
1st Sentence: When bedtime comes, there are two reasons why I want to stay up longer.

Topic: Names for Stuffed Animals
1st Sentence: Foo-Foo and Tah-Tah are good names for teddy bears, but there are two other names I have for my stuffed animals.

ARROW TO THE SUN
Gerald McDermott
Grade 3
Questions developed by
Margaret Hutchingson

NOTE: The teacher should explain to the children that this is a Pueblo Indian legend.

WHY DID THE BOY WANT TO FIND HIS FATHER?

Why didn't the other Indian boys allow the Boy to join in their games? How did the Boy feel about this?

How do you think the Boy felt when he told his mother, "I must find my father. No matter where he is, I must find him"? Explain.

Why do you think the Boy's mother let her son go?

Why did the Corn Planter and the Pot Maker not answer the Boy's question?

Why did the Arrow Maker create a special arrow out of the Boy to take him to the sun?

Why didn't the Boy's father recognize him?

WHAT DID THE BOY LEARN ON HIS JOURNEY TO THE SUN?

Why did the sun say the Boy had to prove himself?

What do you think happened in the Kiva of Lions? In the Kiva of Serpents? In the Kiva of Bees?

In what way did the Boy change the lions? The serpents? The bees?

How was the Kiva of Lightning different from the other chambers? Why didn't the Boy change the lightning? In what way was the Boy changed?

How do you think the Boy felt about leaving his father, the sun, and returning to the earth?

Why did the cornstalks turn into maidens?

Why did the Indian people choose the Dance of Life to celebrate the Boy's return?

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

1. Show children the two-page illustration where the Boy is shot into the heavens toward the sun. Ask them what they think the book might be about.
2. Have the children talk about which one of the following would frighten them the most (or least): a roomful of bees, of snakes, of lions, or of lightning.

SUGGESTED ESSAYS

Topic: Teasing
1st Sentence: If my friends teased me like the Boy's friends teased him, I would do two things.

OR

If I were the Boy getting teased, I would have done two different things than he did.

Topic: Trials
1st Sentence: If I had to choose the hardest trials the Boy had to pass, I would pick these two.

Topic: Making an Arrow from a Boy
1st Sentence: If theArrow Maker could tell me how to make an arrow from a boy, he would give me two directions.

Topic: My Own Sign
1st Sentence: If I could have a special sign like the Boy did, I would want two things in it.

Topic: Bravery (or Courage)
1st Sentence: I think the Boy was brave for two reasons.

OR

There are two ways in which I think I could have been braver than the boy.

TRUMPET OF THE SWAN
E. B. White
Grade 4
Questions developed by
Rita Mendelson and
Edith Wenzel

WAS LOUIS HANDICAPPED AS A TRUMPETER SWAN?

When Louis first met Sam, how did he communicate?

Why was it important for a trumpeter swan to have a voice?

What was Louis's reaction when his father told him he was dumb?

How did Louis's father encourage him to overcome his handicap?

How was Louis able to compensate being without a voice?

Was Louis considered handicapped by the human beings he met?

When did Louis first encounter difficulty communicating with other swans?

What were some factors that finally led Louis to realize he had overcome his defect?

WAS LOUIS'S FATHER JUSTIFIED IN TAKING THE TRUMPET FROM THE MUSIC SHOP?

Why was Louis's father so upset when he realized that he had a son without a voice?

What influenced his decision to go after a trumpet?

Why did his father crash into the store window instead of going in another way?

Is there any way in which Louis and his father could have earned the money first so that they could have purchased the trumpet?

Why was it so important for Louis to earn money?

Why did the father feel so strongly about risking his honor to take the trumpet for Louis?

Why didn't Louis return the money to the music store instead of his father?

HOW DID SAM'S RESPECT FOR WILDLIFE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF ONE LIVING THING FOR ANOTHER AFFECT THIS STORY?

What were some of the ways that Sam showed his love and respect of wildlife?

Why was Sam allowed to keep the swan?

Why was Sam so insistent that Louis go to school? Why didn't the boy realize that learning to read and write wouldn't solve Louis' problem?

How would the story have been different without Sam?

How did Sam come to Serena's rescue?

What other jobs could Sam have chosen and still kept his involvement with wildlife and nature?

SUGGESTED ESSAYS

Louis' father told him that the fact that he couldn't trumpet might, indeed, be an advantage because it would force the cygnet to be a good listener. "I assure you," said the cob, "that you can pick up more information when you are listening than when you are talking." Think about a time when careful listening benefited you. Write about your experience in a well-developed paragraph which includes both an introductory and a concluding sentence.

Sam thought that taking Louis to school to learn how to read and write would help the cygnet with his communication problem. The teacher said, "Why does a bird have to learn to read and write? Only people need to communicate with one another." Who do you think was right, Sam or Mrs. Hammerbotham? Defend your position in a well-developed paragraph, giving reasons to support your opinion.

Louis showed his intelligence by learning to read and to write on a slate. Did this really solve his problem? In a well-developed paragraph, give several reasons why it did or did not. Remember to include an introductory and a concluding statement.

When Louis' mother told the cob, "Have you ever heard him say good morning as the others do...burbling and beeping," the cob got very upset. He answered, "Fatherhood is quite a burden at best. I do not want the added strain of having a defective child, a child that has something the matter with him." What do you think of the cob's attitude? Is he right to feel the way he does? Defend your opinion in a well-developed paragraph, giving two or three reasons why you feel as you do.

Louis' father decided to fly to Billings, Montana, to get a trumpet for his son. Because he had no money, he risked his honor, his "excellent character and high ideals" and became a thief. Can you think of any ways in which Louis or his family could have earned money in advance to pay for the trumpet, rather than steal it? Write about two or three possible solutions in a well-developed paragraph which includes an introduction and a conclusion.

Why was Louis not content to live out his life with Serena at the Philadelphia ZOO? Why did he tell the Head Man, "Safety is all well and good: I prefer freedom"? How do you feel about Louis' decision? Defend your position in a well-developed paragraph, giving reasons for your opinion.

THE PINBALLS
Betsy Byars
Grade 5
Questions developed by
Margaret Hutchingson

WHY DID CARLIE HAVE SUCH A NEGATIVE ATTITUDE?

What caused Carlie to adopt her impolite ways?

Why did Carlie take an instant dislike to her foster mother?

The author says that Carlie was "as hard to crack as a coconut." Do you agree? Why or why not?

Why did Carlie watch TV so much?

Why did Carlie try to goad Harvey into insulting her? Why was she upset by politeness but not by insults?

What was the meaning of Carlie's letter to her mother?

Why did Carlie make lists called "Big Events and How I Got Cheated Out of Them"? ..."People Who Have Done Me In"?

Why did Carlie say she felt like she was a "slave" when asked to do small chores for Mrs. Mason?

Why did Carlie feel she could learn to sew better if Harvey was watching?

WHAT CAUSED HARVEY'S DEEP SADNESS?

Why was Harvey put into a foster home?

What did Harvey's mother mean when she said that she was going to live in a commune to "find herself"?

What caused Harvey's father to become an alcoholic?

Why did Harvey say that he had broken his legs in a football accident?

Why did Harvey pretend that he was writing a letter? Why do you think he decided to make a list of bad things that had happened to him?

Harvey continued to make lists about himself. How do the topics of the lists tell us something about Harvey? ("Bad Things That Have Happened to Me"..."People I Am Afraid Of"..."Books That I Have Enjoyed"... "Promises My Mother Broke"..."Gifts I Got That I Didn't Want")

How did Harvey deal with his disappointment about the Kentucky Fried Chicken?

Why did Harvey think his mother would come and get him if he could get in touch with her?

How did Harvey explain the fact that he had not received a letter from his mother since she left home?

Why did Harvey's sadness increase after his dad came to the Masons' house and took him out to Bonanza?

WHAT EFFECT DID THE BENSON TWINS HAVE ON THOMAS J ?

Do you think the old ladies should have told the authorities that Thomas J was living with them during the six years he was there?

Why did Thomas J feel so good about finding Carlie's earring? Why did he get so upset when Carlie accused him of stealing it?

Why didn't Thomas J want Harvey to know he was saying his prayers?

Why did Thomas J begin to talk in a softer voice?

Do you think that Thomas J was right when he told Carlie that the Benson twins didn't believe in candy, chewing gum, or soda pop? From what they say to Thomas J, what do the twins seem to believe in?

Why did Thomas J find it difficult to express his thoughts? Why did he have so much trouble expressing love?

Why did Thomas J say, "I hope your hips get better," even though the twins couldn't hear him?

When he and Mr. Mason were driving away from the Benson house, why was it important to Thomas J to imagine himself as he was when he arrived there?

Why did Thomas J like to be with Mr. Mason?

Why was it so important to Thomas J when Mrs. Mason hugged him?

HOW DID THE THREE CHILDREN CHANGE FROM BEING PINBALLS TO NOT BEING PINBALLS?

What did Carlie mean when she said that Harvey, Thomas J, and she were pinballs?

What did Carlie think that Mrs. Mason could learn about life from watching a pinball machine?

What did Carlie mean when she said to Harvey, "You and me and Thomas J are a set"?

In summarizing her thoughts about parents and children, Carlie said, "Life is really unfair." Do you agree with that statement? Why or why not?

When Harvey wanted to be left alone to sulk, why did Carlie insist on staying with him?

Why did Carlie suggest that she and Harvey run away?

Why did Carlie eavesdrop on Harvey's conversation with his father?

Why was Thomas J unable to sleep while Harvey was at the hospital?

Why did the gift of a puppy change Harvey's spirits?

What was the significance of Carlie's saying to Harvey, "Promise me you won't ever try to look like anyone but yourself again"?

What was the significance of Thomas J's moving close to Mr. Mason in the car and asking him to tell more stories of his youth?

What was the significance of Thomas J's joining Carlie in the plot to get the puppy without consulting the Masons?

What was important about Carlie's saying to Mrs. Mason that she would never give up trying to cheer Harvey up?

Carlie said that cheering up Harvey was "a preview of coming attractions until she became famous." What did she mean?

Why did Carlie offer to help Mrs. Mason with the housework?

What role did Mr. and Mrs. Mason play in turning the children away from being pinballs? What role did the children play in changing from pinballs to non-pinballs?

Why did Carlie say that the three of them were no longer pinballs?

SUGGESTED ESSAYS

1. Because of her mother's lack of affection and her stepfather's abuse toward her, Carlie adopted a negative attitude and was impolite to everyone. Have you ever known anyone who was unhappy and took out his or her frustrations on others? Tell about such a situation in a well-developed paragraph.

2. Harvey's mother left home; his father was an alcoholic; and Harvey spent much time alone at home. In his sadness, he made lists about himself, such as "Bad Things That Have Happened to Me," "People I Am Afriad Of," and "Gifts I Got That I Didn't Want." Do you think Harvey was just feeling sorry for himself, or was he justified in feeling so down-hearted? Explain your answer in a well-developed paragraph.

3. Thoams J was just a toddler when he came up the road to the Benson's house and was taken in by the old twin sisters. Because of his upbringing, he found it difficult to express love, explain his thoughts, and relate to Harvey and Carlie. In separate paragraphs, write about three ways in which life at the Mason house changed Thomas J. In your essay, include an introduction and a unifying conclusion.

4. Why did Harvey want to hide the truth about how his legs were broken? Describe a situation you have experienced in which you lied because you did not want others to know what had really happened. End your writing by telling whether you ever did tell the truth and why you did so.

5. Carlie, Harvey, and Thomas J. turned from being pinballs to non-pinballs. In three distinct paragraphs explain how and why each child changed. Begin your essay with an introduction and end with a unifying conclusion.

THE LOTTERY ROSE
Irene Hunt
Grade 7
Questions developed by
Mickey Madden

WHAT HAS CONTRIBUTED TO GEORGIE'S POOR BEHAVIOR AND TO HIS IMAGE OF BEING "MEAN" AND RETARDED?

What is Miss Cressman's attitude toward Georgie? Why do you think she feels as she does about him? Can you understand why she does not stop the children when they laugh at Georgie?

Why does Georgie's mother allow Steve to beat her son? Do you think she loves Georgie as she says she does? Explain your answer.

When the school nurse goes home with Georgie, he supports his mother's story Why won't Georgie tell anyone that Steve and his mother abuse him?

How does Mrs. Sims show kindness to Georgie? Why do you think she doesn't inform the authorities about him?

Why is Georgie's prize a source of fear as well as joy?

WHY DOES GEORGIE CHANGE DURING HIS STAY AT THE NEW SCHOOL?

Why does Georgie cherish his rose bush so much?

Why does Georgie want to plant his rose in the garden rather than any place else?

Georgie begins to trust Timothy. In what ways are the boys different? Why do you think they are so different?

Why does Georgie trust Sister Mary Angela?

Why is Mrs. Harper angry at Georgie for planting the bush in her garden?

How do you think the rose has managed to survive the rough treatment it has received so far? Can you think of what it might symbolize?

Until now Georgie had been considered "unteachable." Why do you think Mr. Collier is able to help Georgie read?

Why does Georgie love Robin so much?

Why does it take Georgie so long to admit his love for Mrs. Harper?

WHAT DO YOU SEE FOR MRS. HARPER AND GEORGIE IN "THE ROAD IN FRONT OF THEM"?

Why does Georgie move his rose bush to Robin's grave? Do you think Mrs. Harper understands Georgie's reasons for doing this?

Do you think Georgie believes Mrs. Harper "borned" him? Why does he want to believe she is his mother?

What does Mrs. Harper mean when she says, "I didn't 'born' you, but you're mine--no matter where I go or what I do--you're mine"?

SUGGESTED ESSAYS

"Then the sixth prize was awarded and it went to the holder of the ticket numbered 8662-71-4923. It was a rosebush...Of all good things on earth, a rosebush." Why is the rosebush such an important prize to Georgie? Explain your ideas in a well-developed essay which includes both an introduction and a conclusion.

Explain, in an essay including an introduction and a conclusion, in what ways Georgie and his rosebush are alike.

Mr. Collier succeeded in teaching Georgie to learn to read. Why did the techniques which Mr. Collier used work where Miss Cressman's had not? Describe three teaching methods used by Mr. Collier and tell why you think they were effective in unlocking the barrier Georgie had built up against learning.

Georgie wants to share his life with Robin now that he himself has been enriched by the concern of others. Think of someone you know to whom you have given (or can give) your love, strength, and wisdom. Explain why the person needed support, how you gave it, and describe the outcome.

It took the efforts of many people to change Georgie's outlook after his frightening experiences. Choose three characters in The Lottery Rose and explain why you think they had the greatest effect on the transformation which took place in Georgie.

Child abuse is a self-perpetuating cycle; that is, the person who was an abused child becomes an abusive adult. In an essay which includes an introduction and a conclusion, explain why you think this pattern exists and what can be done to end it.

ANNE FRANK: DIARY OF A YOUNG GIRL
Grade 8
Questions developed by Margaret Hutchingson

HOW IS ANNE SO CHEERFULLY ABLE TO MEET THE HARDSHIPS OF HER LIFE, INCLUDING GOING INTO HIDING?

How is Anne able to stand the suffering?

Why does Anne believe that the way they live in hiding can make a difference to the world?

Does she feel that it is wrong for other people to have gay parties and lots of food? Explain.

WHY DOES ANNE HAVE SO MUCH TROUBLE GETTING ALONG WITH THE OTHERS IN THE SECRET ANNEXE?

Why does Anne's mood change?

Is Anne still able to bring "fresh air" to the Secret Annexe? Explain.

Anne wrote, "...and I shall not shrink from the truth any longer, because the longer it is put off, the more difficult it will be for them when they do hear it." What does she mean?

Should Anne have shrunk from the truth in her relationship with her mother? Why or why not?

What does Anne mean when she says, "A quiet conscience can make one strong"?

Why does Anne call herself "a little bundle of contradictions"?

Why does Anne continue to argue for her ideals?

How has going into hiding caused Anne and Margot to become older than most girls their ages?

Why doesn't Peter show his real feelings?

What meaning does Anne see in her father's statement, "All children must look after their own upbringing"?

Why does Anne feel that young people are really lonelier than old people?

Does Anne continue to feel that the occupants of the Secret Annexe have ample compensation for their privations? Explain.

WHY, ACCORDING TO ANNE, ARE THE JEWISH PEOPLE BEING PERSECUTED?

What does Anne mean when she writes, "Let us remain aware of our task"?

What task is she talking about?

Why does Anne consider suffering the special task of the Jews?

What does she think their suffering will accomplish?

Since the Jews are suffering anyway, does she mean that they must suffer in a certain way?

What does Anne think this will do to the people who are causing their suffering? Does Anne think that God is causing their suffering?

What does Anne think that the Jewish religion has to give to the world?

Why does Anne say that they can never become just Netherlanders, or just English, or representatives of any country for that matter?

Why is Anne bothered that Peter wants to pretend that he is not a Jew after the war is over?

Why do Miep and her husband, Mr. Kraler, Mrs. Koophuis, and Elli risk their lives to hide the Franks? Is this their task?

WHAT ARE ANNE'S FEELINGS ABOUT WAR?

What is Anne's explanation of why people can't live peaceably together?

How does she feel that the millions of dollars spent on destructive weapons should be used?

How does she explain the fact that some parts of the world have surplus food rotting away while other starve?

What does Anne mean when she says, "The little man is just as guilty" [of war]?

Why doesn't Anne have a feeling of despair about her own situation in the war?

SUGGESTED ESSAYS

1. The people who lived in the Secret Annexe suffered in many ways during the two years that they lived there. Write about three things that you think would be the hardest for you to accept. Include an introduction and a conclusion in your essay.

2. When the Nazi soldiers searched the Secret Annexe after the arrest of its tenants, they overlooked Anne's diary, which was later found and given to the only survivor, Mr. Frank. In what ways do you think that Anne's diary has made an impact on the world's view of Nazism? Explain your opinion in a well-developed essay.

3. Anne's relationship with her mother was not good. Anne wrote, "It is hard to speak the truth, and yet it is the truth: she has pushed me away, her tactless remarks and her crude jokes, which I don't find at all funny, have made me insensitive to any love from her side....I shall not shrink from the truth any longer, because the longer it is put off, the more difficult it will be for them when they do hear it." Do you agree with Anne's decision to express her true feelings about her mother, or should she have saved her parents pain by keeping them to herself? Defend your position in a well-developed essay which includes an introduction and a summarizing conclusion.

4. Have you ever felt anger or hostility toward someone as Anne did for her mother? How did you handle the situation? Describe your experience in a well-developed essay.

5. Anne wrote, "I have one outstanding trait in my character, which must strike anyone who knows me for any length of time, and that is my knowledge of myself.... I understand more and more how true Daddy's word were when he said: 'All children must look after their own upbringing.' Parents can only give good advice or put them on the right paths, but the final forming of a person's character lies in their own hands." Do you agree that, in the end, "children must look after their own upbringing"? Defend your position in an essay of five paragraphs,including an introduction and a conclusion, in which you cite specific examples to support your point of view.

6. Do you feel that, because of the good advice and love you have received from your parents, you will be able to "look after your own upbringing when the time comes to do so? Explain why you feel as you do in a well-developed essay.

7. In her diary, Anne writes, "It's really a wonder that I haven't dropped all my ideals, because they seem so absurd and impossible to carry out. Yet I keep them, because in spite of everything I still believe that people are really good at heart.... I can see the suffering of millions and yet, if I look up into the heavens, I think that it will all come out right, that this cruelty too will end, and that peace and tranquility will come again." These words are part of Anne's diary entry for July 15, 1944; her first diary entry was on June 14, 1942. Does it surprise you that Anne is still optimistic and feels that "people are really good at heart...and that peace and tranquility will come again"? Agree or disagree with this question in an essay of five paragraphs, including an introduction and a conclusion.

8. Despite the fact that it was difficult for a girl as young as Anne to be as quiet and inactive as she had to be while her family was in hiding, she wrote, "We have ample compensation for our deprivations... When I looked outside right into the depth of Nature and God, then I was happy.... As long as you can look fearlessly up into the heavens, as long as you know that you are pure within...you will still find happiness." In an essay of five paragraphs, including an introduction and a conclusion, explain what Anne means in this diary entry, dated February 23, 1944, after being in hiding for a year and eight months.

9. Anne has strong feelings about war and peace. "What," she writes, "oh what is the use of the war. Why don't people live peacefully together? Why all this destruction?...Why do they make still more gigantic planes, still heavier bombs?...Why should millions be spent daily on the war and yet there's not a penny available for medical services, artists, or for poor people? Why do some people have to starve, while there are surpluses rotting in other parts of the world? Oh, why are people so crazy?"

   Anne wrote these words in 1944. Does the situation she describes still exist today? Are people "crazy"? Respond to Anne's questions in an essay which includes three body paragraphs, and introduction, and a conclusion.

10. Anne does not blame the leaders of Germany for the war. She writes, "The little man is just as guilty, otherwise the peoples of the world would have risen in revolt long ago! There's in people simply an urge to destroy, an urge to kill, to murder and rage." Do you agree with Anne? Why or why not? Defend your position in an essay of five paragraphs, including an introduction and a conclusion.

11. When Anne began her diary, she was thirteen years old. She was fifteen at the time of her last entry. Do you feel that some of her feelings toward her mother, her father, her sister, Peter, Mrs. Van Daan, and Mr. Dussel may have come about because she was a teenager? Do you think that teenagers in general have a more difficult time adjusting to those around them and to certain situations? Agree or disagree in an essay of three body paragraphs, citing specifics either from your own experiences or from Anne's diary to support your arguments.

ROLL OF THUNDER, HEAR MY CRY
Mildred Taylor
Grade 7
Questions developed by
Margaret Hutchingson

WHAT DID CASSIE LEARN ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BLACKS AND WHITES?

Why were so many black children unable to finish their educations?

Why wouldn't Cassie and Little Man accept the "new" books from their teacher? What was Mrs. Logan's reaction to the new books?

What was Big Ma's reaction when Little Man said that things were not "fair" between whites and blacks?

Why did the children dig the trench so that the white children's school bus would get stuck? How did the white people retaliate?

Why did Mr. Morrison lose his job?

Why did Papa insist that Mr. Morrison continue to live with his family?

Why did Big Ma say, "Just in the wrong place at the wrong time" to explain the burnings at the Berrys' house?

Why did Mama take the children to see Mr. Berry when he was dying from his burns?

Why did the sheriff call Henrietta a liar when she reported what she had seen?

Why was Cassie so upset at the Mercantile when the whites were waited on before the blacks?

Why did Lillian Jean act so superior when Cassie accidentally bumped her in the street? Why did Big Ma make Cassie apologize? Why was Cassie unable to understand why an apology was necessary? Why did she later pretend to be Lillian Jean's servant by carrying her books? Why did she beat up Lillian Jean?

Why did the Logans go to so much trouble to organize their neighbors to boycott the Wallace store?

Why did Big Ma park the farm wagon so far from the entrance at Strawberry?

How was Mr. Jamison different from the other white men that Cassie knew?

Why did Mr. Jamison offer to back the black families' credit so they could shop in Vicksburg?

After Uncle Hammer took the right of way from the Wallaces on the one-way bridge, why did Mama say, "One day we'll have to pay for it"?

Why did Jeremy Simms bring gifts to the Logan family on Christmas Day? Why did Stacey put the flute away for good?

When the note on the land was called up by the bank, why did Papa remark, "Granger's got a need to show us where we stand in the scheme of things"?

Why did Uncle Hammer reject farm life in favor of his big city job?

Why did Mr. Wallace and Mr. Granger use the incident of the books as an excuse to fire Mama?

Why didn't the night riders go through with their threat to hang Papa and Mr. Morrison when the cotton field was on fire?

HOW WAS THE FAMILY A DOMINANT INFLUENCE IN THE LOGANS' LIVES?

How did their extreme poverty draw the family members closer together?

Why were the Logan children so reluctant to disobey their father's order not to go to the Wallace store?

Why did Stacey decide to tell Mama that he had gone to the Wallace store to beat up T.J.?

How did Uncle Hammer handle Stacey after he gave his coat to T. J.?

Why did Cassie ask her father's advice about how to handle Lillian Jean Simms?

Why was it so important to Papa that his children know that he tried to beat Granger?

How did the children try to comfort Mama after she was fired from her teaching job?

What was Stacey's reaction to Jeremy's statement that he disliked his brothers and sisters?

Why did Cassie and the younger boys insist on going with Stacey when he took T. J. home?

How did Papa compare the Logan family to a fig tree?

What was the father's purpose in taking Stacey to Vicksburg? Why did Stacey blame himself for the accident in which his father's leg was broken?

Why did Papa set fire to his cotton field?

WHAT CAUSED T. J. TO TAKE THE ACTIONS THAT HE DID?

In what ways did T. J. get out of doing his chores at home?

Why did T. J. cheat on tests in school?

How do you feel about T. J. allowing Stacey to take the blame for his crib notes?

Why did T. J. leave the wagon to go down to the Mercantile against Big Ma's orders? Why did Stacey and Cassie accompany him?

Why did T. J. want the pearl-handled gun?

Why did T. J. make fun of Stacey's new coat? Why did he later show off the coat after he had talked Stacey into lending it to him?

What part did T. J. play in getting Mrs. Logan fired from her job? Why did he do this?

Why did T. J.'s parents say they couldn't control their son any more?

Why did T. J. befriend the Simms boys?

What is the significance of the fact that Melvin and R. W. were white? Why was T. J. upset when the Logan children denied his friendship?

Why did T. J. bring the Simms boys to the revival service?

Why did T. J. come to seek aid at the Logan house after the incident at the Mercantile? How had his feelings about the Simms brothers changed?

Why did T. J. say that Stacey was his only friend?

Why did Stacey agree to take T. J. home?

Why did T. J. get the full punishment for what he and the Simms had done together? Do you think he deserved such a harsh sentence?

<u>WHY WAS LAND SO IMPORTANT TO THE LOGAN FAMILY?</u>

Why did Mr. Logan leave his family to work laying track in Louisiana?

Why did Cassie find it hard to understand why the family lived in poverty and worked just to keep up payments on the land?

Why was it so important to the Logans to keep Mr. Granger from owning their land?

Why did Mr. Andersen's lumbermen cut down the trees near the pond in spite of Mr. Logan's objections?

Why didn't Big Ma want to use the Logan land as collateral to back other blacks' credit in the Vicksburg stores?

Why did Big Ma transfer ownership of the land to her sons?

Why did the Logans continue to shop at the Vicksburg stores even after Mr. Granger threatened to repossess the land? Why did they continue to boycott the Wallace store even though this action had little effect on the Wallaces' business?

Why was Uncle Hammer willing to sell all his possessions to save the land when the bank called up the note four years early?

Why did the family insist that Uncle Hammer leave immediately after he had brought the money?

What motivated the Logans to continue shopping in Vicksburg even after most other black people had given up?

SUGGESTED ESSAYS:

1. Little Man was only a first grader; yet he brought his handed-down book home "because he accepted it as a necessary tool for passing the first grade....He took no pride in it." He asked his mother why things were not "fair" between blacks and whites. Do the inequalities in education which Little Man was referring to still exist today? Respond to this question in an essay of five paragraphs, in which you cite specific reasons why educational opportunities for blacks have or have not improved. Include both an introduction and a unifying conclusion.

2. Cassie became upset at the Mercantile when Mr. Barnett waited on white customers before blacks. When she said to him, "Y-you was helping us," he replied, "Well, you just get your little black self over there and wait some more." When Cassie persisted in her insistence to be served, Mr. Barnett finally spat at Stacey, "You get her out of here...and make sure she don't come back till yo' mammy teach her what she is." Why was Mr. Barnett so impolite? Why do you think he didn't really want to do business with blacks? Was his attitude representative of that of most white people at that time? Reply to each of these questions in a separate paragraph. Add an introduction and a conclusion which unifies your essay.

3. In what ways were Mr. Jamison and Jeremy Simms different from the other white people in this story? Explain your answer in an essay which includes three body paragraphs, an introduction, and a conclusion.

4. When Uncle Hammer took the right of way from the Wallaces on the one-way bridge, Mama said, "One day we'll have to pay for it." Do you think that Uncle Hammer's assertive actions toward the white people in this book were better than Mama's, who feared retaliation? Explain your answer in an essay of five paragraphs, including an introduction and a conclusion. Include specific references to the book to support your position.

5. Do you think that the members of the Logan family were drawn closer together by their common problems? Identify the three biggest problems that you feel confronted this black family, and explain their effect on the Logan's family life in a well-developed essay which includes an introduction and a conclusion.

6. Jeremy told Stacey that he would be lonely if he did not have the Logan children to play with. Stacey replied, "A fellow's gotta like his own kin." Write about three reasons why Jeremy did not like his brothers and sisters. Support each reason with specific references to the book. Unify your essay with an interesting introduction and a summarizing conclusion.

7. Stacey could not understand how Jeremy could prefer his friends to his own brothers and sisters. "A fellow's gotta like his own kin," he said. Explain why Stacey felt that a person's love and loyalty should go to his or her own family before it was given to others.

8. Mama was fired from her teaching job because she "taught things some folks just didn't want to hear." How do you feel about teachers expressing their personal opinions and feelings in their classrooms? Should they keep to the assigned curriculum, or is it all right to teach some things that are not necessarily discussed in textbooks? Defend your position in an essay of three body paragraphs, citing specific reasons for your opinion.

9. Papa compared the Logan family to a fig tree. "You see that fig tree over yonder, Cassie? Them other trees all around...that oak and walnut, they're a lot bigger and they take up more room and give so much shade they almost overshadow that little ole fig. But that fig tree's got roots that run deep, and it belongs in that yard as much as that oak and walnut. It keeps on blooming, bearing good fruit year after year, knowing all the time it'll never get as big as them other trees. Just keeps on growing and doing what it gotta do. It don't give up. It give up, it'll die. There's a lesson to be learned from that little tree, Cassie girl."

   What lesson do you think that Papa was trying to teach Cassie? Do you think the message carried in the story of the fig tree is pertinent to other situations in life, not just to the struggle between blacks and whites? Explain your position in a well-developed essay, giving specific reasons for your opinion from your own experience.

10. In what ways was T. J. an irresponsible boy? Write about three character traits that showed that T. J. did not have the same ideals that the Logan children had. Support each of your choices with specific examples from the book. Unify your essay with an introduction and a conclusion.

11. Mama was concerned about T. J. when she said, "The boy's gotten out of hand and doesn't seem to be anybody's doing anything about it." Papa replied that Mr. Avery had admitted that "he couldn't do nothing with T. J. any more." Give three suggestions to Mr. Avery about how he could control his son. Be sure to give reasons why you think your suggestions will work. Begin your essay with an introduction, and end with a summarizing conclusion.

12. Mama felt that Mr. Avery could control T. J. by putting "a good strip of leather against his bottom." Do you think that kind of discipline is effective with teenage children? Why or why not? Support your position in an essay of three body paragraphs, providing specific examples from your experiences as support.

13. Why was the land so important to the Logan family? Give three reasons why the family united to defend their right to own land when others threatened to take it from them. Be sure to support your statements with reasons from the book.

LOCKED IN
Ingemar Gustafson
Grade 5-12
Questions developed by
Dorothy Doyle

LOCKED IN

All my life I lived in a cocoanut.
It was cramped and dark.
Especially in the morning when I had to shave.
But what pained me most was that I had no way
to get into touch with the outside world.
If no one out there happened to find the cocoanut,
if no one cracked it, then I was doomed
to live all my life in the nut, and maybe even die there.
I died in the cocoanut.
A couple of years later they found the cocoanut,
cracked it, and found me shrunk and crumpled inside.
"What an accident!"
"If only we had found it earlier..."
"Then maybe we could have saved him."
"Maybe there are more of them locked in like that..."
"Whom we might be able to save,"
they said, and started knocking to pieces every cocoanut
within reach.
No use! Meaningless! A waste of time!
A person who chooses to live in a cocoanut!
Such a nut is one in a million!
But I have a brother-in-law who
lives in an
acorn

Ingemar Gustafson
(Translated from the Swedish by May Swenson)

HOW AND WHY MIGHT A PERSON BE ISOLATED FROM OTHERS IN HIS COMMUNITY?

What does the speaker tell us about his life?

Where did he live?

What was it like there?

What did he suppose might happen to change his life?

Did his life change? If not, why not? If so, why?

What is the reaction of other people when they discover his death?

What do they do?

What do they decide?

Will the other people keep trying to "save" people like the speaker who are "locked in"?

Should they keep trying to discover other people who are locked in?